FSN Network Agriculture Task Force Meeting December 18, 2012

Attendance: Andrea Mottram, TOPS; Tom Cole, Consultant; Tom Remington, CRS; Catherine Craig; Paul Sommers, Consultant; Sam Goff, Food for the Hungry; Adam Reinhart, FFP; Rupert Best, CRS; Melissa Teuber, TOPS

* Updates
  + FSN Network meeting, Washington DC Nov 2012
    - There were 4 agriculture sessions
      * 2 agriculture and nutrition sessions
      * 1 market development session
      * 1 seed systems session
    - There was positive feedback and discussion
  + Planning for a FSN Network meeting in Bangladesh 2013
    - The dates are not confirmed, but should be around late April
    - This will include a training element for implementing staff
  + Representation at the CORE meeting in Washington DC
  + Representation at the Spring N-Glee meeting in Uganda
    - This meeting was attended by mission staff, African foreign nationals, US based staff, BFS, contractors and other implementers
    - The purpose of the meeting was to help agriculturists be aware of using agriculture to help nutritional outcomes
    - There is a dilemma in the fact that the USAID missions are applying the FtF value chain approach
      * This focuses on 1 crop, which could be at the detriment of mix cropping and diversifying.
  + Work on tools and defining training plans
* Training plans
  + Field-based
    - Three, 4-day training sessions potentially Bangladesh, Guatemala and Niger/Uganda.
      * The Bangladesh training will tie into the FSN Network Knowledge Sharing event
      * The other countries were chosen as they have program start-ups
      * Each training is regional
      * Focus: key essential ANRM elements (core competencies) and how they inter-relate from a management perspective.
    - Four, 2-day training sessions selected from countries with on-going development food assistance programs.
      * These trainings could be done in different languages
      * These trainings will be more country focused
      * These trainings will go into more detail about specific technical elements of the core competencies and will link with tools
      * Focus: technical detail on specific topics within core competencies (e.g. market analysis, understanding and overcoming barriers to technology uptake).
  + US-based
    - One, 3-day training session in DC.
      * This training will be for the technical HQ backstop staff
        + It will expose them to technical areas within the core competencies and link them with the training that is being done in the field
      * Focus: An abridged version of the 4-day field training.
    - Three, 1-day discussion workshops.
      * These can be done online in the fsnnetwork.org space for the agriculture task force
        + Another possibility is to have them in person in DC.
      * Focus: Specific technical area development.
        + This could start the discussion about setting minimum standards for what is a farmer field school or conservation agriculture
  + Every training will be demand driven
    - COPs will be contacted for field trainings
    - Input by the task force will be asked for both types of trainings
      * Input can be given on the task force section of fsnnetwork.org
    - Discussion forums will have a bit more HQ input
    - There will be a balance between the demands expressed and including training regarding specific core competencies
  + The focus of each training will be on what implementers are struggling with in their day-to-day work
    - One possible example includes practical ways of using ICT and mobile technology
    - Another possible example is to have those studying seed systems to discuss the stumbling blocks and tools that can be used to overcome them
    - Each training will end with next steps, so it is more than just a discussion
      * TOPS hopes to move forward on some of these issues
    - Specific crops can be used as case studies or examples, but will most likely not be the main focus of trainings
      * Crops used can be adapted to the setting as appropriate
  + Trainings will most likely start after April.
  + Locations of trainings can be narrowed down in discussions and emails
  + Trainings will be geared towards program managers and technical program staff.
* Initial focus on specific technical areas:
  + As the core competencies cover a broad number of areas, we need to prioritize the focus for tools and trainings
  + Market Development
    - Andrea Mottram is the point person
    - Includes market analysis, value chain development, farming as a business, and private sector engagement
  + Agro-ecology
    - Tom Cole is the point person
    - Includes IPM, agroforestry, conservation ag, soil/water management, climate change adaptation/mitigation, and drought cycle management
  + Agriculture and nutrition
    - Paul Sommers is the point person
    - Includes nutrition sensitive value chains, and ag-lead/nutrition-lead and practical applications
  + Social behavior change in agriculture
    - Sam Goff is the point person
    - Includes links to farmer extension and barriers to change
  + TOPS hopes to make 5 page technical guides around each area.
    - They will give a summary of the technical area, best practices, and 1-2 top tools that can be used
    - Specific topics can be given a set of minimum standards
    - Information from these guides will be obtained by engaging with others and collating what is already in use
      * The task force will be an integral part to this process
* Agro-enterprise can be looked at through a resilience lens.
  + Focusing on mono-crops can hurt resilienc if not done correctly
    - It can come at the expense of smaller family farming systems that are built on a diverse cropping system
  + USAID is only discussing resilience in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa
    - Resilience work can be done in other areas, but the term only applies to these 2 areas given that there are only joint planning cells for resilience in these areas
    - It is incumbent on FFP programs to keep up good work in resilience outside the 2 USAID areas
* The next FSN Network ANRM Task Force meeting will be in mid to late January
  + Fuze will be used again
  + Andrea will be sending an email out regarding possible agenda items
* Sam will be sending out an email regarding starting a discussion in the agriculture task force section of fsnnetwork.org
  + The discussion will be about looking at applying SBC to agriculture programming
    - The focus in the past has been mainly on SBC and nutrition